



Consultation Response Form

Consultation closing date: 11 October 2013
Your comments must reach us by that date

Primary assessment and accountability under the new national curriculum

If you would prefer to respond online to this consultation please use the following link: www.education.gov.uk/consultation/

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.	
Reason for confidentiality:	

Names:	
Professor Robin Alexander, Professor Wynne Harlen, Alison Peacock and David Reedy	
Please tick if you are responding on behalf of your organisation.	<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>
Name of Organisation (if applicable): CAMBRIDGE PRIMARY REVIEW TRUST	

Address: Cambridge Primary Review Trust Alcuin College D University of York York YO10 5DD
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If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Ministerial and Public Communications Division by e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the department's '[Contact Us](#)' page.

Please mark the box below that best describes you as a respondent.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Primary school head teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	Primary school teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary school head teacher
<input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary school teacher	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other education professional	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local authority
<input type="checkbox"/>	Governor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent / carer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Union / professional association
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pupils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other		

Please Specify:

This response is a collaborative response from the Cambridge Primary Review Trust (CPRT), successor to the Cambridge Primary Review (CPR). The Review stands as the largest and most comprehensive enquiry into English primary education for half a century. It collected, *inter alia*, substantial evidence on primary standards, assessment and accountability.

For the Review's findings and proposals on primary school standards, assessment and accountability, see:

Alexander, R.J. (ed) *Children, their World, their Education: final report and recommendations of the Cambridge Primary Review*, Routledge, chapters 16 ('Assessment, learning and accountability') and 17 ('Attainment, standards and quality'), and pp 496-8) (conclusions and recommendations on assessment and testing).

For the Review's specially-commissioned reviews of national and international research on standards and assessment, see:

Alexander, R.J. *et al* (ed) *The Cambridge Primary Review Research Surveys*, Routledge, chapters 17 (Tymms & Merrell on national evidence on standards over time), 18 (Whetton, Ruddock & Twist on international evidence on standards over time), 19 (Harlen on assessment alternatives for primary education), 28 (Cunningham & Raymont on quality assurance in primary education) and 29 (Wyse, McCreery & Torrance on the impact of recent assessment reforms).

The Review also presented both oral and written evidence to the Bew Review of KS2 assessment. The written evidence is available at:

http://www.primaryreview.org.uk/downloads/PDFs/Assessment_review_submission.pdf

Assessment reform is one of the seven priorities of the Cambridge Primary Review Trust.

The Trust was formally launched in September 2013. We hope that the Department will be prepared to discuss our work in this area as it develops through the Trust's programmes of research, school leadership and professional development.

Teacher assessment and reporting to parents

1 Will these principles underpin an effective curriculum and assessment system?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure
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- The 'Case for Change' 1.3 states that **secondary readiness** is the most important outcome 'that any primary school should strive to achieve'. Although pupils leaving primary school should of course be ready for what follows, we do not accept that this should be the main aim. Rather, readiness should be treated as a given and the aims of primary education should both encompass and extend well beyond this. Primary education should provide a curriculum, expertly taught, that enables every child to experience high quality learning across the full range of a broad, balanced and rich curriculum. We agree that all children should be confident in the areas of English and mathematics and should be ambitious about their continuous improvement and attainment. We do not, however, accept that achievement in these two areas of the curriculum alone will prepare any child for the demands of secondary education. Primary education is about enabling every aspect of a child's development to flourish and grow in the moment rather than in preparation for an unknown future. Further, the argument that the 'basics' alone define and measure what matters flies in the face of evidence showing (a) the developmental and cultural importance of the arts and humanities in their own right and (b) the way that learning in one area directly impacts on, and enhances, learning in others. As we have also frequently noted, HMI and Ofsted inspection evidence is clear that there is an association between high standards as measured in KS2 tests and the breadth and quality of the wider curriculum.
- We also feel that the notion of 'secondary ready' is damaging in that no mention is made of support for those children who may be judged by the proposed system of assessment to be 'unready' at the age of secondary transfer.
- Examination of evidence about the positive impact or otherwise of the KS3 curriculum on those children who start secondary school with attainment below 4b is not presented. We believe that there is an urgent need to address this.
- **Teacher assessment** can serve formative and summative purposes. The consultation document makes a 'clear separation' between formative assessment and summative assessment (para 1.6). We agree that formative assessment should be the responsibility of the school while statutory summative assessment should be prescribed by Government. Both formative and summative assessment need to reference the curriculum. Those schools that are not required to follow the National Curriculum should clearly reference curriculum progression as part of the teacher assessment process.
- **Formative assessment** is very important and we wish to underline its strong role in raising the standard of attainment of every pupil. It is well established by research that this is of particular benefit to lower achieving children and is thus important in ensuring that all pupils attain highly. However, we wish to emphasise the vital role of feedback to the child (either verbal or written) as a means of securing individual improvement. In formative assessment, evidence is gathered during learning activities and interpreted in terms of progress towards

the lesson goals. Information about where pupils are in this progression can be used to indicate what next steps are appropriate. Evidence of current learning is fed back into teaching and learning to help pupils take these next steps. This feedback helps to regulate teaching so that the pace of moving toward a learning goal is adjusted to ensure the active participation of the students. Pupils can participate in these processes if teachers communicate to them their goals for the lesson and the criteria by which they can judge their progress towards the goals. Marking and grading are not required, nor is reliability an issue since formative assessment information is gathered frequently and be self-correcting.

- **Summative assessment** for reporting purposes should be carried out by teachers and should be a required part of the statutory national assessment framework. Summative teacher assessment can be based on many observations of individual pupil's performance, across the curriculum and over time. It is possible to strengthen the credibility of a teacher's own assessments by internal (to the school) and external moderation. Although these processes take time, moderation activities constitute some of the very best professional development because they help teachers to understand what constitutes high expectations and standards in specific subject areas. The demands of the new national curriculum offer ideal opportunities for increased KS2 / KS3 communication, moderation and shared assessment.
- **Statutory teacher assessment** can be used for reporting individual pupils' attainment to parents, pupils' next teachers in the primary school and secondary school at transfer. The new national curriculum programmes of study set out what teachers should teach pupils to know, understand and do. These represent criteria and standards that teachers can use to assess and report pupils' achievements. They also, importantly, embody expectations of progression in learning in the way that they are set out, by key stage or year-by-year. Those schools that decide not to follow the National Curriculum will benefit from rigorously aligning assessment with their chosen curriculum.

2 a) **What other good examples of assessment practice we can share more widely?**

- The best assessment practice takes place in classrooms where **pedagogy, curriculum and assessment are aligned** in pursuit of excellence.
- Good assessment practice takes place in classrooms where teachers take account of children's learning in each subject on a daily basis and use this as the starting point for planning the next lesson. This assessment may take many forms but has most impact when it leads to **feedback** for each child. Formative assessment that enables teachers to understand what has been learnt, is embedded practice in many primary schools across England.
- Assessment that enables children to challenge themselves and keeps opportunities open for accelerated progress is important. This kind of assessment facilitates trust between the learner and teacher and encourages dialogue. The Expert Panel rationale for removing levels was that the profession needs to be more open minded about what children can achieve and **resist a tendency towards a deterministic approach** :

'We are concerned by the ways in which England's current assessment system encourages a process of differentiating learners through the award of 'levels', to the extent that pupils come to label themselves in these terms.

Although this system is predicated on a commitment to evaluating individual pupil performance, we believe it actually has a significant effect of exacerbating social differentiation, rather than promoting a more inclusive approach that strives for secure learning of key curricular elements by all. It also distorts pupil learning, for instance creating the tragedy that some pupils become more concerned for 'what level they are' than for the substance of what they know, can do and understand' (Expert Panel, 2011:44)

- We recommend that DfE / Ofsted should commission **research into assessment practice** in primary schools that achieve outstanding results for all children. However, we would recommend that any such research should examine assessment practice that includes all aspects of the curriculum and does not confine analysis to English and mathematics.
- **Reports to families** - narrative reports on individual pupils should include attainment in all subjects and should be achievement-related, that is, indicate what the pupil knows and can do in relation to the national curriculum requirements identified in the programmes of study and attainment targets. Achievements in other (non-statutory) subjects chosen by the school should also be included in the reports. Such qualitative accounts of pupils' achievement, without recourse to levels, grades or scores, is already part of good reporting practice. In many schools, children contribute their own self assessment to such reports. Records of this kind cannot be entered into a national database for analysis, but this should not be required since national tests are available for this purpose.
- Development of **adaptive testing** that enables individual children to demonstrate the quality of their understanding, thinking and capacity to apply knowledge could move the assessment agenda forward in a positive way. We need assessment that drives excellent learning. We are currently in danger of providing limited teaching that focuses on answering predictable test questions instead of encouraging divergent thinking.
- Pearson are interested in developing online adaptive assessment materials. CPRT are now working closely with Pearson and this could become an area for **future research and development**.
- We agree that sample testing of science at KS2 should continue. This approach allows a wider range of learning objectives to be assessed than a single test taken by every child, thus enhancing the potential for drawing trustworthy inferences from the results. Since tests in reading, English grammar, punctuation and spelling and mathematics do not at present involve sampling it will not be possible to draw accurate inferences about trends in national standards in these subjects, as it will be for science.

2 b) **Is there additional support we can provide for schools?**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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- Schools would benefit from opportunities to share best practice about assessment practice.
- Case studies of a range of assessment practice that enables schools to demonstrate that children are making outstanding progress would be very helpful. A central web resource would be beneficial.
- Teaching Schools, federations, HEIs, LAs and local groups of schools would benefit from working collaboratively to share approaches and to access existing research into assessment processes that enhance learning.
- Ofsted regional headteacher reference groups could ensure that inspection teams are aware of local discussions / solutions about gathering evidence of progress of individuals and cohorts throughout the school to support inspection judgements. Examples of good assessment practice that enables transparency about quality of learning throughout the school for all children and across a broad curriculum, could be shared via the Ofsted website.
- Dissemination of evidence about the limiting effect of some assessment practice on performance would be beneficial.
- The Department may care to note that the Cambridge Primary Review Trust has prioritised assessment for learning and will be working both with schools and its sponsor, Pearson, to develop and disseminate effective practices.

National curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science

3 Does a scaled score, decile ranking and value-added measure provide useful information from national curriculum tests?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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- **Scaled scores** enable parents, carers and children to be informed about individual performance on national curriculum tests. We support this idea. Any scores, however, are opaque in relation to what pupils know or can do and the scaled scores will need to be accompanied by a clear explanation of what a score means in relation to the curriculum for English and mathematics. The proposed use of scaled scores will provide sufficient information to enable parents to understand the achievement of their child and will enable teachers to compare the attainment of individual pupils with the cohort average.
- Attainment on a scaled score should enable each pupil to understand the current measure of their performance under test conditions, with accompanying ambition that those aspects currently not understood are future areas for success.
The test should not be seen as an end in itself until final qualifications are achieved at the end of secondary statutory schooling.
- **Decile ranking** would create artificial boundaries and risk being treated in the same way as the existing 'levels'. We believe there is nothing to be gained by using deciles. Such reporting could label pupils with a consequent de-motivating impact on both high as well as low scorers. The use of deciles, where a single mark can make the difference between being in one decile or the next, is unnecessary.
- Notions of **fixed ability** would be exacerbated by a baseline test in reception that claimed to reliably predict future attainment. Similarly, fixed performance indicators throughout schooling could too readily imply failure and lead to disengagement and low ambition.
- Participation in international surveys should be continued so as to benchmark national performance.

Baselines to measure progress

4 Should we continue to measure progress from the end of key stage 1, using internally-marked national curriculum tests?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure
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- It is important to note that the Written Ministerial Statement of 17 July 2013 stated that 'statutory assessment in core subjects at the end of key stages is designed primarily to enable external accountability'. We accept that National Curriculum tests, as proposed, provide data in a useable form suited to this restricted use. However, it has to be recognised that the tests in English and mathematics can only sample the programme of study of a key stage in very limited ways. Thus the validity will be low and while the reliability of the test, for monitoring the performance of the cohort, may be robust, the reliability of the results for individual pupils will inevitably be fragile.
- See also our wider point at (1) above about the over-reliance for pupil assessment and school accountability purposes on test scores in literacy and numeracy. Though important, they cannot be expected to serve as a proxy for the totality of either a child's attainment or a school's quality and efficiency.
- At KS1, test results are not sufficiently dependable to provide a baseline for a useful measure of individual pupil progress. Thus we support the continued current arrangements for teacher assessed national curriculum tests and tasks at KS1 but only for reporting to parents.
- Only in the case of schools with Key Stage 1 children only (Infant schools) should these end of KS1 test results be aggregated across the school and used as part of a range of information for accountability.
- The principle of measuring progress rather than attainment is helpful as this focuses attention on every child. However, it is important that schools are incentivised to provide accurate ongoing assessment for each child to minimise a tendency towards 'gaming' results in a high-stakes system.

5 If end of key stage 1 national curriculum test results are used as the baseline to measure progress, should school-level results be published?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure
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- We do not agree that KS1 test results should be used to measure progress. As referred to earlier, we believe the most reliable form of assessment at KS1 in English and mathematics will be achieved through robust, moderated teacher assessment over time. This teacher assessment should be used internally by schools to evidence progress by each child.
- The progress that a pupil makes in passing through the school will be evident to parents and carers in the year by year narrative reports. Schools will base their judgements for the narrative reports on children's capacity to reach or exceed the requirements within the year by year national curriculum programmes of study.

6 Should we introduce a baseline check at the start of reception?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure
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- Whilst recognising that schools cannot be judged or compared purely in terms of outcome measures at the end of KS2, since children in different schools will have started from different baselines of achievement in reading and mathematics, it also has to be acknowledged that it is not possible to produce or apply tests either at the start or end of the reception year or at the end of KS1 that will satisfy the strict psychometric criteria for use in value-added calculations. For that reason the results of assessment at these points ought not to be included in value-added calculations for judging and comparing schools.
- The revised EYFS Profile is a useful assessment at the early years stage. But the breadth of its compass, which is an advantage for the purpose of identifying children's needs, is a disadvantage for the purpose of providing a baseline for narrower national tests in reading and mathematics. Whilst certain of its sub-scales could be used, they are unable to discriminate sufficiently to provide a good baseline measure alone, although could be included in a model of the impact of relevant input variables.

7 Should we allow schools to choose from a range of commercially-available assessments?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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8 Should we make the baseline check optional?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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N/A: as already noted, a baseline check will not give dependable data for the purpose of measuring individual pupils' progress.

Accountability

9 Do you have any comments about these proposals for the Department's floor standards?

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- On accountability, we agree with the Bew report that 'a broader range of published data [than test results] would help ensure schools are held accountable in a fair way' (Bew, p24) With this in mind it is important to go beyond accountability based on test data, which is the focus of most of the proposals in the consultation document.
- As noted earlier, it is not helpful to publish any end of key stage teacher assessments. The published results should be based on national curriculum tests only and as three-year rolling averages, as recommended by the Bew report. The aggregation of **scaled scores** on KS2 tests would be an appropriate measure of attainment at the school level, since this avoids the negative effects of school targets that focus on particular levels.
- Schools should be held accountable for how effective the school is in developing the learning of pupils with different needs and backgrounds. This will require more sophisticated modelling of how different factors affect attainment at KS2, in order to show how a school has created positive trajectories for pupils in different categories. This data should form the basis for accountability instead of overall attainment.
- Ofsted should be responsible for preparing and reporting analysis of how effective a school is for all its pupils and for synthesising this judgement with additional information on school effectiveness from other available data.
- The above points notwithstanding, we remind the Department of the Cambridge Primary Review's finding, grounded in extensive evidence, that in recent years accountability has been too narrowly defined and prescribed in terms of the outcomes targeted and the measures, indicators and processes used. No reform of assessment and accountability, however radical it purports to be, will adequately address the challenge of educational standards in England's primary schools unless it also addresses the habitual failing in the way both assessment and accountability are defined and conceived. In this matter, much can be learned from schools themselves, for, as we noted at 2(a), the best assessment practice takes place in classrooms where pedagogy, curriculum and assessment are aligned in pursuit of excellence.

10 If we take a baseline from the start of reception, should end of key stage 1 national curriculum tests become non-statutory for all-through primary schools?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure
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11 Should we include an average point score measure in floor standards?

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Yes

☐

No

☐

Not Sure

12 Are there any other measures we should prioritise in performance tables?

☐

Yes

☒

X

No

☐

Not Sure



- Benchmarking should compare schools with similar background variable profiles, such as free school meal entitlement, CLA, SEN, English as a second language and children from different ethnic backgrounds.
- Professional learning profiles of teaching staff and school leaders could be included, offering evidence of further professional study. This would provide an additional incentive for accredited learning such as Masters or Doctoral research and would provide recognition of further professional development.
- Pupil performance as assessed by methods based on teachers' judgments should be one part of information used in evaluating the performance of schools. Schools should draw up through a process of self-evaluation, an annual report for public discussion which provides information about the pupils, the curriculum, other activities, teaching methods and pupils' performance. Essentially, information about performance of pupils should be considered against a background of contextual conditions. If parents and governors find cause for concern, inspectors could be called in. There is currently too much focus on the threat of an Ofsted inspection. Fear can lead to pressure to focus on surface quality rather than encouraging the depth of learning that enables innovation.

Recognising the attainment and progress of all pupils

13 What data could be published to hold schools (including special schools) accountable for the attainment and progress of the lowest-attaining pupils?

- Retention of progress indicators such as 'P' levels may be helpful. Pupils in special education or with profound SEN(D) in primary schools may make progress much more slowly. However, it is vital that progress across all areas of learning is highly valued and that expectations are high.
- New targets need to be more inclusive of all pupils within schools.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply.	X
E-mail address for acknowledgement: administrator@cprtrust.org.uk	

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, please confirm below if you would be willing to be contacted again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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All DfE public consultations are required to meet the Cabinet Office [Principles on Consultation](#)

The key Consultation Principles are:

- departments will follow a range of timescales rather than defaulting to a 12-week period, particularly where extensive engagement has occurred before
- departments will need to give more thought to how they engage with and consult with those who are affected
- consultation should be 'digital by default', but other forms should be used where these are needed to reach the groups affected by a policy; and
- the principles of the Compact between government and the voluntary and community sector will continue to be respected.

Responses should be completed on-line or emailed to the relevant consultation email box. However, if you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Coordinator, tel: 0370 000 2288 / email: carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed responses should be sent to the address shown below by 11 October 2013

Send by post to
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